



(Your cover was the brainchild of Dean Rasmussen- a man who lives in Richmond, VA)

DEAR GOD! THE FOOTNOTE ISSUE!

WELCOME TO DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #121!

"Footnotes are like lines of cocaine. They seem like a good idea at the time but when you get into double digits, they become a problem on a number of different levels." - Tony Gancarski

Hiya! We took a while on this one because we decided that every now and then you need a fat ass dose of OVERKILL- so strap this on and here ya go, beloved reader- the whole magilla: a thousand reveiws and a thousand jokes and a thousand footnotes and thousand subjects and a

thousand variations on the term BUCKET OF BLOOD. Sup deep the grandeur that is the MOTHERFUCKING DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW OVERKILL....

!@!@!@!@!@ ALL PRO WRESTLING - 10/9/98

(by PHIL SCHENIDER)

This was a high school fundraiser(1) and one of the better APW shows as far as work goes, with three darn good matches.

BOOM BOOM COMINI/RIC WARD vs. CHICANO FLAMES UNO Y DOS(2)

This was a pretty nothing match with Comini(3) teaming with Ward who refuses to tag, and says something into the APW PA system explaining why(4). The Flames do some mid-level highflying, with Flame #2 even doing a Orihara(5) moonsault, which the fat, worthless Comini doesn't catch him on at all, causing Flame #2 to land head and chest first onto the floor(6). Man alive is Comini suck ass. This was basically just to set up the Ward angle.

RIC TURNER/JASON CLAY vs. FRANK MURDOCH/ERIN O'GRADY

Jason Clay is another in the long line of APW fat guys(7) while Ric Turner is a another in the long line of APW skinny guys(8). Murdoch is probably the biggest veteran in the company and is a good, old school worker, while O'Grady is now Sports Entertainer Crash Holly(9). This match was another throw away, with O'Grady being the face-in-peril for the vanilla offensive styling of Turner and Clay. Clay knocks Murdoch from the apron and Murdoch snaps and jumps Clay throwing SHOOT~!! punches(10) at him, and the match gets thrown out. Complete waste of O'Grady and Murdoch and another match tossed down the angle toilet.

VINNY MASSARO vs. BOYCE LEGRANDE

These two are the best of the APW new generation, and have quite the kick ass little match here. You can tell these guys trained and worked a lot together because there is some pretty high end, complex stuff for a pair of rookies and it comes off pretty smoothly. In fact some of the moves even came off a little too smooth, i.e. in parts it looked more like interpretive dance then combat. Massaro(11) is quite the choice little worker and they start out with good stuff including a hammerlock reversal sequence into a knee first facebuster by Massaro and a tope con hilo from the top rope by LeGrande. This all lead to a really hot ending With LeGrande hitting a spinning Mysterio ranaesque DDT(12), while Massaro counters a missed clothesline into a Kudome Driver(13), and counters a headscissors attempt into a running Air Raid Driver(14) for the win. The match was worked at a great pace with lots of near falls a little short(15) and formless(16) to be a real match of the year contender, but a hell of an indy match nonetheless.

"SHOOTER" TONY JONES vs. "THE BROWN BOMBER" ROBERT THOMPSON

I really liked this match the first time I saw it(17) but I cooled on it some after the second watching. Thompson is a APW mainstay(18) and Tony Jones is a former amateur champ and current BAT-BAT worker(19). The match started really cool with Jones doing a lot of really powerful looking amateur throws and takedowns(20) and Thompson using his speed and agility to counter(21). I was really into that part of the match, but when they get back into the ring, Thompson takes down Jones with a headlock takeover. Now this is the part of the match I have a problem with. Jones is a amateur champ and a dominant mat wrestler, he should school

Thompson on the mat, but they have a whole sequence where Thompson keeps him in a sitting headlock with no counter. I also didn't really like the ending, Jones wastes Thompson with a trio of nasty suplexes(22) and a top rope Belly to Belly, Thompson then counters another suplex and is back on offense no worse for wear with a spinning DDT, neckbreaker drop and his arial attack trio(23) for the win. There was a lot to like in this match, with both guys executing their moves very well, but I just thought the match psychology and selling were a little suspect and that drops the match down a notch for me. It may be a little much to expect flawless selling and psychology from an indy(24) but APW is usually so good in that respect, that I hold them to a higher standard.

MIKE MODEST vs. "MACK DADDY" JIMMY RIPP

Ripp plays Joel Hartgood(25) to Modest's TAZ as this is just a big squash match with Modest hitting a bunch of nasty moves on Ripp. I reviewed one of their matches before(26), and this is basically the same thing. The strategy of putting a pushed star with athletic jobbers who can get over their offense as deadly, really worked well for TAZ and Sid Viscous, but those two suck ass in the ring, and couldn't really get over any other way, while Modest rules and would be better served with wrestling an actual match. Damn choice second rope Death Valley Bomb was the mitigation.

"FALLEN ANGEL" CHRISTOPHER DANIELS vs. SUICIDE KID

This was a rematch from their well received match on August 7, 1998(27). This was another in a long lineage of crisply worked, smooth Christopher Daniels juniors matches(28) and while Kid is a pretty vanilla U.S. junior(29), this was a really nice match. Actually they did a lot of different spots then their first APW match. They started with a series of hammerlock reversals, with Suicide slapping Daniels in the back of the head when he had him in the hammerlock(30). Then they did a bunch of flips and counters out of a test of strength. Suicide knocked Daniels to the floor and hit a tope-con-hilo. Then it started getting dicey, Daniels does the stinky rope assisted Abdominal Stretch(31), then a couple of minutes later he does a people's lionsault(32), then to complete the trio of suck he hits the Angels Wings(33) and when Kid puts his foot on the ropes, he puts on a chinlock, WTF!?!(34) They kicked it into gear after that glitch, and delivered the usual stellar Chris Daniels ending, including a multiple series of reversals all based on Daniels hitting the Last Rights(35), which he final did for the win. Take out the suck section in the middle you have an Indy MOTYC, even with it, this was still a fun match.

MAXX JUSTICE vs. VIC GRIMES

These are the two largest APW workers during this time period(36, 37) and they have a pretty decent Big Man match, although they blow some stuff and there isn't much psychology. Still world better then say Big Show v. Kane. Both guys did a lot of flying, Justice(38) did a nice tope and a moonsault, while Grimes did a pretty good clothesline of the apron and a big splash. Modest was the special referee so there was lots of shenanigans. They Dusty the title(39) on to Grimes(40) and then when the second ref reverses, Modest and Grimes beat him and the skinny manager up(41). Not good, not bad sort of indifferent.

~!~

@#@#@#@# GAEA G-Panic TV 3/21/00

(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

Chigusa Nagayo/ Toshie Uematsu vs Mayumi Ozaki/ Sugar Sato: Toshie Uematsu is the comeback player of the year in Joshi as she has really put it all together and is putting together a great string of matches with very little fanfare- the story of her life, basically. SUGAR fucking rules from every possible angle of wrestling you can think of. She and Toshie have been beating the crap out of each other for a couple of months now- as each are occupying the same spot in each's respective faction of the beloved GAEA - that of the overlooked youngster (1) who is ready to take on the big girls and get some wins over the more pushed compatriots. Nagayo and Chigusa carry the beginning of the match with Old Bridge Lady bitchiness to set up the last eight minutes of SHEER HATRED- as Sugar and Toshie beat each other into oblivion. Sugar is competing with KAORU for most consecutive blood-spewing blade jobs in a row because she severs her own Superior Vena Cava and blood sprays forth like Honma in a particularly tight headlock. As for the whole hate thing, Sugar coated in her own blood smacking Toshie in the face while Sugar has that look of just bottomless disdain on her face is pretty priceless. From a wrestling standpoint, the key to the coolness of Sugar is that her offense is a power offense but she will take a bump right on her neck to get over your suplex and she makes Toshie and Chigusa look like Duelling Otsukas in sheer nastiness of cruelty in the form of suplexes, and her ending Duel Of The Suplexes with Toshie gets Toshie's Straightjacket German over more than anything else any else has done for Toshie up to this point. Chigusa is starting to realize that she can push Toshie Uematsu hard and she could get over as much as Meiko Satomura and could eventually get her positioned in the same way if Toshie's knee cooperates this time round. Chigusa is also realizing the BIG value Sugar is to her promotion in that she is KAORU-like in her high-grade execution and also her Fuerza-esque ability to make her opponents offense look totally Queensized- thus putting her in the KAORU position of her age group strata. And BOY was there a lot of blood. GAEA ROX.

Lioness Asuka vs Saika Takeuchi:

Takeuchi is in the ring with the frickin GREAT Lioness Aska- who has carried both current loads Kyoko Inoue and Devil Masami to really good to great matches as of late- so the fact that the Lioness can guide the rookie to something watchable isn't surprising. just the fact that Lioness sells so much for her makes this above your usual rookie match. either way, it gives us no indication if Saika is the Nouvelle Meiko Satomura or merely a cuter Rina Iishi. Linger for a moment and then carry on with your usual madcap breakneck viewing schedule.

Rie vs Sakura Hirota:

Hirota is an acquired taste. And I ain't THAT hungry there, girly. At least she's in there with RIE Nakamura. Please fast-forward so I don't have to try to analyze this ilk of match. Will ya do that for me? Good ol' Dean? I was there for you back in the day, remember? God love ya, thanks!

Toshiyo Yamada vs Toshie Uematsu:

It took GAEA and the genius of Chigusa to FINALLY make Toshiyo Yamada into the supersexy UltraVixen that we knew was hiding somewhere in her. This whole "survivalist in the apocalypse

and all I can find are these tiny tiny pants" Thing works in SO many ways. Anyhoo, this match starts out all daring as Yamada does a Jumpy Spin kick right to the face and Toshie leans into it like a champ/psycho and the first few minutes is Toshie selling it like she just leaned into Yamada kicking the fuck out of her in the face. As Toshie goes on offense, the stiffness never leaves and Toshie brings the stiffness until losing the offensive advantage by missing on a Plancha. The story is that Toshie is gonna work Yamada's leg to the point where wristlock Suplexes will get the nearfall. After a toprope dropkick to the knee, Toshie goes fullbore for the knee submission and Toshiyo sells it like- HEY!- she's one of the best ever. Toshie gets all tencious and shit and Toshiyo heads for the floor for escape. Toshie drags her into ring and starts busting up the knee more- even incorporating the knee in a SWANKY Capture Suplex Variation. Yamada gets the Offensive Transition with a TOTALLY GNARLY Dangerous Backdrop and Yamada gets a Triangle Lock that she can't secure because she is selling the knee, so Toshie escapes by slugging Yamada right in the face and gets another Wristlock Suplex nearfall. Yamada gets in three superjaw-breaking heelkicks and gets a nearfall. Yamada then starts channelling Yuki Ishikawa and just starts slugging Toshie right in the motherfucking face. Yamada shatters Toshies dreams of ever being a Maybelline Covergirl by knocking Toshie out with a super fat ass haymaker and gets the three count. Yamada sells the knee as she crawls out of the ring. I'm hoping that some future configuration of GAEA allows for these two to feud because this rocked.

Aja Kong/ Lioness Asuka vs Sugar Sato/ Chikayo Nagashima:

Hey, the best Joshi tagteam against the best wrestlers in the world. I'm guessing this will be good. For the ALL ASIA ATHLETE WORLD TAG TITLES! WOO-HOO! Oh. Okay. It's not for the titles. THUS it ain't going Broadway. It IS gonna be a Match Of The Year Candidate because it motherfucking kicks motherfucking ass like a motherfucker. It starts with a big brawl through the crowd so I'm figuring on Sugar Bringing The Plasma. Lioness goes all Lucha with Nagashima and it's effortless looking because Lioness fucking rules the motherfucking world in every style. Lioness then kicks the living hell out of lil Chikayo and then Aja comes in and kicks the living hell out of Chikayo and chikayo is all hurty and stuff. the Aja Brainbuster is quite merciful for some reason. Aja and Nagashima do all the weird Counter Into Arm-Submission spots that made their OZ Academy match so cool. Aja does the Rufus R Freighttrain Jones Slam My Head Into The Turnbuckle And It Doesn't Affect Me spot and the flood of memories flood my memory. (2) Nagashima takes to the air and kills her partner. aja decides that the Sugar BladeJob begiiiiiiiiinnnnns.....NOW! there is the rare Puroresu ref bump. Lioness takes a flying headscissors but follows up with a HIDEOUSLy stiff lariat. From this point it just gets into these ninety-five elaborate finishes that are set-up by the widest variety of set ups I've ever seen in a tag match. Aja is at the height of her power in figuring out a way for these opponents who she dwarves to look completely credible against her. Lioness's strength is making opponents that she towers over look completely credible. Nagashima is really undersized and has developed an amazing ability to make herself look completely credible against opponents as huge as Aja and Lioness. This is an amazing match in the way that it really throws the entire playbook at this match and every possible combination of saves and rollups and counters and everything possible to the point that by the time the finishes lose logic, RIE hops in for the Oz save and then you get a whole new set of logical finishes until Aja can finally isolate Nagashima

and kill her dead. Go watch this now to see how you fight your way out of a booking corner. This is great.

Mayumi Ozaki/ Akira Hokuto vs Chigusa Nagayo/ Meiko Satomura:

This is an angle unsuccessfully disguised as a wrestling match. Meiko takes every dangerous move that Hokuto has left, which is a super nasty Tiger Driver 91 and a super nasty Northern Lights Bomb. After a seven minute "match", Devil walks in and turns on Chigusa. there ya go.

Overall, another really great G-Panic. Not as psychotically weird as the other GAEA-based wrestling shows reviewed in this beloved DVDVR but just as strong from a wrestling standpoint. GET ALL THIS.

~!~

\$\$*\$AJ WORLD'S STRONGEST TAG TEAMS VOLUME 1 - COMMERICAL TAPE
(by POGO PETE STEIN)

This is basically a Shohei Whitman's Sampler of RWTL matches from the 70s-80s.

GIANT BABA/JUMBO TSURUTA vs. RUSHER KIMURA/GREAT KUSATSU (12/10/77):

Back then I'm sure there was a ton of interest for an interpromotional match like this (Rusher and Kusatsu representing the old IWE group); now it's more interesting to scope out the fantastico hairdos everyone was sporting.(1) Baba is still sort of nifty at 39, pulling off some cool matwork and actually teasing a splash off the top onto Rusher. Baba hits the 16-mon kick on Kusatsu for the pin at 14:30, at which point they tease HEAT BETWEEN THE BOYS until order is restored and everyone makes up at the end. Decent if plodding little affair.

MIL MASCARAS/DOS CARAS vs. TERRY FUNK/DORY FUNK JR (12/7/79, Osaka Furitsu):

The entrances here take like 19 hours between both teams wading through hundreds of worshipful fans. This match is not nearly as good as I might have expected since it's two shiny, happy gaijin babyface teams going through the motions and doing variations on "hail fellow, well met" for *15 MINUTES*. Finally Mil finishes tippy-toeing around the ring (2) and the Funks get serious long enough for them to hit the finish, which consists of Mil hitting the Plancha From Heck on Terry while Dory reverses a Dos rollup out of nowhere and gets the duke at 18:16. Postmatch it's handshakes all around and you want the Funks to just beat the crap out of the Mascaraseseseseses for wasting their time (and ours) like that.

GIANT BABA/JUMBO TSURUTA vs. ASHURA HARA/GENICHIRO TENRYU (11/30/81):

It's Tenryu back when he was all hyper-spunky at a mere 31, doing lots of multiple sumo thrusts to the corner (3). This leads to one really funny spot where Tenryu starts to do it to Jumbo who immediately puts the kibosh on that with an elbow to the face. He also gets a TON more hang-time on the top-rope elbow as you might imagine. Match is moving along until Hara realizes he hasn't placed his bets for the night yet, so he allows himself to get backslid by Jumbo at 15:54 and hauls ass to the back to call his bookie.

GIANT BABA/JUMBO TSURUTA vs. BRUISER BRODY/STAN HANSEN (12/9/82, Sapporo Nakajima):

OH YEAH! We finally get a team ready to BRING THE HATE as the MPC(4) huss their way down to the ring.(5) This match is great because the action is non-stop and the crowd is going nuts the whole time for both teams. You can see how smart a worker Brody was as the second things start to die down with Hansen putting Jumbo in a headlock on the mat, he gets the crowd back into the match by hussing away until they start aping him. Easily the best part of it is that it's all in-ring except for maybe 20 seconds on the floor as Jumbo posts Brody at one point. You sit there and wait and wait and wait for the juice to start flowing... that no one bleeds here is perhaps the second-most amazing thing about this whole match. That honor would go to the finish, as Hansen nukes Baba with the lariat and gives Jumbo one for good measure on the apron while Brody hits the King Kong kneedrop on Baba and PINS BABA CLEAN AS A SHEET at 12:24.(6) Amazingly great and even more amazingly clean match which makes the tape a must-see then and there.

RIKI CHOSHU/YOSHIAKI YATSU vs. JUMBO TSURUTA/GENICHIRO TENRYU (11/30/85, Yokohama Bunka Gym)

Somehow my brain locked up and I confused this with the more famous "if you can't beat me..." match. First half of the match is pretty slow since they're GOING BROADWAY, and picks up during a long sequence where Yatsu and Jumbo slap the taste out of each other while Jumbo has Yatsu tied up in a leglock. Before long the crowd is way into it as all four guys are warring with each other. Jumbo crushes Yatsu with a pair of lariats, but Yatsu pulls off a desperation backdrop and tags Choshu at the "2 minutes left" call. Crowd is going solar at this point, only to DIE as Choshu goes for the Scorpion with less than a minute to go. Match winds up in a draw as Choshu and Yatsu work over Jumbo in their corner moments later, but it's on a really flat note from a heat standpoint. Finish might have been hotter if they had Choshu try for a flash move like the lariat.

JUMBO TSURUTA/GENICHIRO TENRYU vs. GIANT BABA/TIGER MASK (11/28/86, Sapporo Nakajima):

TM takes less than 30 seconds to kill himself, going for a corkscrew tope only to almost completely miss Tenryu and wipe out on the floor.(7) Sadly, Baba gets really exposed here early as he's placed in the unfamiliar position of having to take bumps for Jumbo and Tenryu and taking them in such a manner that the crowd starts laughing their collective asses off at him. For some reason they also find it funny whenever Baba goes for rope-breaks. TM handles the bulk of the rest of the match, hitting a sweet somersault bodyblock onto Tenryu in-ring. Later Baba does some fun work with Jumbo as they trade chops while Baba has Jumbo in an armbar. This leads to Jumbo trying to hiptoss Baba out of the corner, but Shohei Marvin rolls through and takes Jumbo with him!(8) Match gets weird at the end as TM hits a ripper German suplex on Jumbo, but Joe strangely holds Baba and Tenryu off before dropping down to make the count, resulting in a ton of "WTF?" heat when Jumbo kicks out at 2. Baba then holds Jumbo for TM to hit a plancha, but Jumbo rolls through and gets the pin at 18:38. Weirdly entertaining match.

You really can't go wrong with the Brody/Hansen match. Other than that it's more of a curio tape, if that floats your boat.

%^%^%^%^% DRAMATIC DREAM TEAM - 11/20/99

(by REV RAY DUFFY)

Taped in someone's basement! It's the DDT! Pre show, we're treated to some mic feedback, then Nise Onita crashes the party and does some work on the stick. The fans seem to be amused as Nise pushes around the ring announcer. This building is real small and the ceiling is low.

Poison "HEY LITTLE LOVA!(1)" Sawada/Tsunebito Naito/Phantom Funakoshi vs. Sanshiro Takagi/Takashi Sasaki/Exciting Yoshida

Sawada has the haunting and least intimidating theme song since Kid Dynamo used "MmmmBop" on an NCW show. This starts with Takagi trying to whip Naito into the ropes, but Naito won't run, I guess because he's a shooter or something(2). So after two attempts, Takagi runs the ropes as if to say "Hey, this is how you do it!" This continues until he runs into a drop toe hold and Naito works over his leg. Yoshida and Phantom tag in. You know, with a name like Phantom, you'd think Funakoshi would have some outlandish or Onryu like gimmick because he's indy scum and all, but he fearlessly no sells that and is just like your generic black tights black boots wrestler. Sawada and Sasaki mix it up a bit, with Sasaki working sort of a strong style/quasi shoot style. He beats on Sawada until Naito comes in and gives him a shoot style piledriver. We have the two pro style guys in as Takagi and Sawada mix it up, with Sawada doing the dreaded Hand Assist from partner abdominal stretch(3)! Sawada's pretty much right in the middle of wrestling, but he did do a cool WAR Special which he flipped over into a bridge while keeping the hold on. Finish comes with Yoshida hitting a low blow from behind into a schoolboy for the win. As Sawada protests post match, Yoshida nuts him as well. Post match, Takagi talks shit on the mic.

Daisaku/Yasaku/Yuki Nishino vs. Koichiro Kimura/Takao Iwasaki/Kazunori Yoshida

Daisaku and Yasaku are the wonder twins of DDT. Daisaku is the kicker type, Yasaku is the poor man's indy scum Satoshi Kojima after an extra bag of potato chips each day. Iwasaki, I think is all high flying in this. Nishino reminds me of a not as good Hideki Hosaka. Yoshida's sort of a kicker, but his kicks sort of lack all that much stiffness. Could be that he is holding back, but it didn't look so hot, especially when Kimura tags in and kicks the crap out of you. The Twins and Yuki do a triple team job on Yoshida before he tags in Kimura. Kimura comes in and beats the crap out of Yasaku. It was weird, it looked like a combo of Yasaku being blown up and Kimura not wanted to play pro style, but this segment was not smooth at all(4). Of course, I sell Nishino short and he throws out a good release german on Iwasaki. Kimura is not afraid to beat the shit out of anyone who gets in with him as he pretty much kills the twins, especially Yasaku, who he makes tap out to a boston crab. Really eh. Kimura seemed like he couldn't really be bothered with selling or working to either guy's strength.

Yasuki Shino/ Mitsunobu Kikuzawa/ Naoshi Sano vs. Poison Sawada/ Tsunebito Naito/ Phantom Funakoshi

It's scrawny team #1! The tape list I got says that it's Yasuki Shino, however, for some reason, I think it's Taneichi Kacho without his middle management gimmick(5), given his outright scrawniness and seeming lack of talent as he gets his ass handed to him by Sawada and Phantom. There's some sports entertainment finish, as a manager and Misae Genki get involved, the end result is Genki hitting her G-Driver (Emerald Frozen) on Sawada and throwing the guy who may be Kacho on top for the pin. I sort of question if it is Kacho because without the middle management gimmick, what's really the point.

Yasaku/ Daisaku/ Yuki Nishino vs. Kamen Shooter Super Rider/ Asian Cougar/ Tonamusako Toba :

Team scrawny #2! And this match as the super fox of indy scum referees, Grace Asano(6)! Cougar decides he's going to wrestle this match in his black hooded wind breaker for some reason. Early on, Cougar kills part of the front row as Nishino headbutts him off the apron and he takes the Nestea plunge into the crowd. Cougar retaliates with two slingshot leg drops, including the death intensive one to the floor as the guy is andging out over the apron. Toba gets treated like a punching bag by Nishino and Daisaku before unloading with some stiff shots of his own. Daisaku does a neat chain of moves where he ax kicks Toba's shoulder to set up an STO and then into a cross armbreaker. Rider tags in. He wears the Sayama promotion shirt. He's very much the "Guy in a ridiculous outfit doing a shoot style/high flier" type deal. The finish comes with team scrawny teaming up on Daisaku ending with Super Rider hitting the Rider Kick(7) to set up Cougar's weird double armbar move with pose for the submission.

Team Scrawny #1 vs. Takagi/ Yoshida/ Sasaki

Midway through the tournament, Takagi throws us a curve ball and stops idolizing Austin(8) to become... The Rock. Which is even funnier when Kikuzawa looks down and realizes he's wearing a Rock jersey. The start of this is all sorts of goofy as Sanshiro just mugs for the crowd and Sano and Kikuzawa try to figure out what he's staring at. Sashiro wrestles in his "\$500" Rock shirt and hits the Sanshiro Elbow early in the match. Of course, the doing impersonations don't stop as Sano hits two CIMA-esque moves with a Venus-esque jumping palm thrust and a flap jack into an x-factor. The mysterious man who gets squashed gets his ass kicked some more with his offense consisting mostly of biting. Takagi puts him in the rack, Genki runs in and nuts Takagi. Sano sets up a top rope move and ends up banging his head on a ceiling beam, leading to Takagi hitting an Uranage, which was weird, because Takagi's move was closer to an uranage than any of Rock's attempts to do one have ever been. This was all sorts of goofy. Post match, Kikuzawa does his Onita impersonation completing with getting the fans to come to ringside and beat on the ring apron and yell "HO!! HO!! HO!!"

Kimura/Iwasaki/Yoshida vs. Team Scrawny #2:

This match was a lot better than the first Kiura match as he seemed to be more willing to work with Rider and Toba than he was with Daisaku and Yasaku. Rider and Kimura trade a lot of holds on the mat and Kimura's not afraid to sell Toba's kicks and punches, so I found I liked this match a lot better. Iwasaki and Cougar throw out a bunch of high flying, but it does seem to get sloppy towards the end. Iwasaki for some reason wanted to give himself a degree of difficulty as he was constantly doing spring and top rope moves in the corner that was directly under a

ceiling beam. The finish came after Cougar hits a sunset flip on Kimura for a two, but Kimura grabs his arm and scissors his head into a triangle lock move to get the submission. Yoshida is pretty much there.

We have a brief interlude where Masao Orihara is interviewed in ring. Much like your standard American Indy mic work, we're treated to a bunch of feedback. Takagi runs in, Orihara blocks his Rock Bottom attempt and nuts him. The guy who was interviewing Orihara was the scrawny guy who may be Kacho, Shino or ring announcer Takuro Kimura(9), holds Takagi for Orihara to kick in the gnads, which he does and in the process, he gets nussed as well. After this, he gets the Stunner from Takagi.

Kurokage vs. Daisuke Taneichi

I dunno who Kurokage's opponent is, the match lists says Taneichi but he sort of looks like Kengo Takai from my Gong Mook mag. Well, whoever he is, Kurokage pretty much kicks the shit out of him and gets him to tap to an armbraker move.

Takagi/E. Yoshida/Sasaki vs. Kimura/Iwasaki/K. Yoshida (Tourney Finals)

Well, the Yoshida on Kimura's side has "Eagle" on his top, so he maybe from the legendary home of the Tiger Man(10). There's a bunch of back and forth action with Kimura laying some heavy shots in on Sasaki. Iwasaki does a run up the ropes tornado ddt and hits his legs on one of the ceiling beams as he swings around. Of course, all his risk taking ends up coming back to haunt him as it does look like he tries a run up the ropes in a corner move and bangs his head on a beam. They do a spot where Sasaki runs down the aisle and hits Iwasaki with a leg lariat as Iwasaki was laying up against the the apron. Takao hits a Michinoku Driver II for a 2 count and we get a pier six brawl as Exciting and Sanshiro throw Iwasaki and Kimura out to the floor. Sasaki kills Takao with a lariat, hits a Northern Lights bomb and then a half crab for the win.

The show sort of lost steam after the 6th match. I enjoyed the two matches the scrawny teams lost.

~!~

DEAN PERMANENT TAPE (1) – 10/97

(by PHIL RIPPA)

This is probably one of the best permanent tapes that Dean has. The first couple of hours of the tape have some pre-Dean Wrestling Powers (2) and the rest is all Gold BABY! The reason this tape is better than most is because it is devoid of the usual crap that makes me pick up the phone and yell at Dean "What the Fuck were you thinking?"(3). I am only reviewing the matches and will skip the random video packages and interviews unless something truly spectacular happens.

Mike Rapada(4) vs. Dean Malenko (Sat Night)

Okay, who did Rapada blow to get this match? No, seriously, who did he blow? One of the reasons Saturday Night used to be THE show to watch was because you would get one of two

things. 1) Random US Indy guys getting their tryout matches(5). 2) Really long matches involving wrestlers you wanted to see. This obviously falls under category one. Malenko dominates the match and then rushes to the back to take a cleansing shower.

Barry Horowitz vs. Disco Inferno (Sat Night)

This was during the run when Disco was having the good beat into him by Chris Benoit amongst others. Simple match with lots of rest holds until Disco wins with the Last Dance. I so liked it better when he didn't know how to apply the figure four.

Silver King vs. Ultimo Dragon (Sat Night)

This would be an example of the second type of match I was talking about before. This around that time period when Dragon was having his problems with Sonny Ono due to Dragon dumping Ono like a sack of potatoes. Silver King and Dragon rip it up for what like seems an eternity and the rubes sit on their hands the entire time (6). Plus, Dusty and Tony continue that fine tradition of talking about the New World Order (7) instead of the match at hand. During the course of the match, Silver King throws one of the best worked kicks I have ever seen (8). Post match sees Yuji Nagata come out and SK and Nagata put the boots to Dragon. I always got a kick out WCW heavily pushing feuds that people that only people like me, Phil and Dean wanted to see.

Barry Houston vs. Fit Finlay (Sat Night)(9)

If I ever get around to making that Best of Fit Finlay on the WCW Syndie shows, this match will be front and center.(10) I have watched this match a bunch of times and something finally struck me. Barry Houston must be a huge Fit Finlay fan and he tried his darndest to impress his idol.(11) Houston and Finlay do a bunch of mat wrestling with the transitions being kicks to the back, punches to the nose and wicked clotheslines. At one point, Houston unloads with everything he has and hits Fit with the best clothesline he could muster. Finlay must have decided "Hey, the kids got spunk" as he takes it easy for the rest of the match. Houston tries a moonsault, which was a neat bit of psychology as it was completely out of place in the context of the match, because when he misses it leads directly to him dropping the match. One of my favorite matches.(12)

El Dandy/La Parka/Psychosis vs. Lizmark Jr./Super Calo/Juventud Guerrera (Sat Night)

Dusty's fandom of El Dandy begins in this match as Dusty sees El Dandy for the first time and immediately falls in love with his physique or something. By the end of the match Dusty was yelling "PIN SOMEBODY EL DANDY!!!!!" Typical WCW Lucha six man as everyone ran through some spots to keep the crowd entertained and then everyone tries to kill themselves during the highspot train.(13) Tony continues to prove he is an idiot as he mixes up who La Parka and El Dandy are.(14)

Prince Iaukea vs. Barry Houston (Pro)

Prince Iaukea makes these tapes WAAAYYYYY too much.

Rey Misterio, Jr. vs. Dean Malenko (Nitro)(15)

This is one of the best Nitro length(16) matches ever. Malenko and Rey Jr. always had these great matches because Malenko could always do all this cool things he could never try with bigger opponents - like the Super Gutbuster(17). Rey does one of the most elaborate armdrag takedowns seen in the states and of course the rubes missed it because they were too busy watching Raven's Flock meander down to their seats. The Gutbuster got the crowd back into the match and then they started popping big when Malenko blocked a rana with a powerbomb but Rey countered the Cloverleaf attempt for the flash pin. It is such a shame that Rey no longer can raise his arms and Dean is working Metal/JAKKED matches.

La Parka vs. Glacier (Nitro)

One of the three good matches that Glacier had in his worthless career(18). That is all due to the fact that La Parka bumped for two and carried Glacier by the hand through a good match. Glacier took a few bumps mainly because Parka said "If I'm doing the job to you, you are taking this unprotected piledriver."

Eddie Guerrero vs. Chris Jericho (Nitro)

You can always judge how good someone is at playing a heel listening to the comments of non-wrestling fans. I think Molly's quote of "Oh, I really don't like that cocky asshole" when she saw Guerrero sums up how good a heel Eddie is/was(19). Jericho has his shoulder taped after torching it the night before in a match against Gedo. This was a weird yet good match. Jericho legit hurt his shoulder and knocked himself loopy so he is off a step. It doesn't help that Guerrero targets the shoulder including hitting the swanky shoulder breaker. Jericho does hit the Giant release German suplex that was all nasty and shit. Jericho knocks himself loopy again as he smacks the back of his on a Superplex. This leads to a bizarro ending as Guerrero ends up getting dropped to the floor after a blown spot and having to go straight to the Frog Splash finish. Who knows what happened here?

Fit Finlay vs. Chris Benoit (Nitro)(20)

Okay, maybe this is THE Best Nitro length match. These were the days when Nitro would have like seven matches you wanted to see. A fast paced, high impact match that frightens the children at ringside with its sheer brutality(21). I could watch these two wrestling a million times and never get tired of it. Benoit gets busted open from the nose but it is hard to tell thanks to Nitro being shot in Bischoff's pussyvision. Finlay gets the majority of offense with Benoit fending off the attack with chops. The momentum swings when Finlay misses the shoulder block into the corner after hitting one early(22). Benoit follows up with the headbutt for the win and the announcers put over both guys. A rematch would take place.

Scotty Riggs vs. Raven (Nitro)

Raven hurts (wink, wink, nudge, nudge) Riggs' eye prompting Riggs going the Flock. Who said Russo needs to be booking for the stupid ideas to fly?

Hulk Hogan vs. Diamond Dallas Page (Nitro)

If anyone doubts why DDP was making these tapes during this period of time, watch this match as Page drags another miracle match out of Hogan.(23) Now I have watched this match about

five times which is more than I want to watch any Hogan match but fortunately this is the good little affair so it is tolerable. The basic story is that Page has the hurt ribs so he can't do much so the little offense he can muster is focused on the neck because he knows the only way that he can win is to hit the Diamond Cutter. Hogan kicks and punches his way through the match with Page overselling everything. I really wonder how long these two rehearsed this before actually performing it. The only downside is that it has the usually NWO ending.(24)

Psychosis vs. Chad Fortune (Pro)

Dean Malenko vs. Chad Fortune (Worldwide)

Dean is quite the Chad Fortune fanboy. Me? I am quite the fast forward fan.

Yuji Nagata vs. Steve Regal (Worldwide)

Nagata and Regal think they are in the Tokyo Dome instead of some lot at Disney World as they have this awesome New Japan Heavyweight match(25) that is the best Worldwide match I have ever seen. Really stiff as Regal brings the palm thrusts and Nagata brings the kicks. Hell, it's a Worldwide match and Nagata is busting out an Exploder while Regal does this freaky cradle suplex. Heenan talks about both men's amateur backgrounds(26). The ending is really sweet as Nagata gets caught on the top turnbuckle. Regal peppers him with shots to the face and delivers a top rope double underhook suplex. This leads directly to the Regal stretch which Nagata has to tap to because his Lordship is also headbutting the piss out of him. A trillion stars.

Fit Finlay vs. Chris Benoit (Sat Night)

The rematch on the MotherShip. Man, there should have been a Benoit vs. Finlay Best of Seven series. Any, this match is just as good if not better than the Nitro match. I think it is better since it got more time and they built off of spots of the first match. (27) Dusty marks out of the violence which is always fun. Finlay gets the win this time as Benoit misses the headbutt and Finlay connects with the Tombstone. Get all this.

Villanos vs. Southern Posse(28) (Pro)

If you squint really hard this is the Midnight Express vs. Young Pistols all over again. The Villanos are one of my favorites so I was all over this match. So was the Disney crowd as they were all about routing for the Villanos. That worked out well as the Posse worked the heels in this match. Several near falls and lots of old school 80s tag team work. HEAT SEGMENTS~! Another reason why you should watch your Syndie shows.

If you question why I index these tapes for Dean, it is because I can find all these hidden gems that no one else has watched and then begs us for a copy of. Now, thanks to Russo - there ain't no more permanent tapes.

~!~

!@!@!@!@!@!@!@!@!@ GAEA G-PANIC TV 4/28/00
(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

Mayumi Ozaki/ Devil Masami vs Lioness Asuka/ KAORU(1):

When I first went through this tape (2), I noticed that Chigusa is once again awash in a sea of her own blood and that Devil Masami was spewing a stream of her blood into the skies in one of the more grim and compelling moments you'll see this year. Then they cut to a shot of Chigusa looking on in piqued dismay and I notice that it's Lioness Aska under the three coats of blood. Either way, this is the first match for Devil Masami to make me do a 180 and say- hell!- if she wants to be in the ring with Lion(3)ess and have Aska carry her and if Devil wants to continue selling for the youngsters like has been, welcome aboard the GAEA Gravy Train, Ms. Masami. You hit the best Viagra Driver in Japan anyway. Boo-ya.

Rie vs Saika Takeuchi:

Takeuchi is a rookie wrestling RIE so it's hard to tell if Takeuchi is a budding Sonoko Kato or the New Millennium Makie Numao. I mean, the fact that this was kinda good despite the rookie offense and general ennui of a RIE match makes me think that Takeuchi is gonna pan out- as she takes the chain-hanging over the toprope like she was Rikki Mae Morton in Ladies Of Smokey Mountain. Other than that, carry on with your usual tape veiwing day.

Lioness Asuka/Kaoru vs. Akira Hokuto/Sugar Sato:

Sugar is fucking GREAT. She and KAORU bring the fucking HATE to this match and it makes for fabulous girl-girl grappling FUN! Sugar starts by yelling "Suck my dick, you old hag!" while kicking KAORU toe-first in the head. Sugar goes solo for most of the match as Soccer Mom Akira Hokuto ruins her hip at some point in the match. Mayumi Ozaki steps in from the outside to pretty much make all the saves that Akira would have made- and luckily there is always a cast of thousands standing around every GAEA match these days. Lionness and KAORU do cool double-teams on the young Sugar, but Sugar and OZ Academy ACTIVATED get the advantage enough times for Sugar to hit a couple nasty Liger Bombs on KAORU. And Lioness has enough wrestling psychological savvy to stay the face in the match by directing Oz Academy traffic enough to never make it look like KAORU and Lioness beating the hell out of Sugar while Sugar is outnumbered. Thus, Lioness is kicking both Chikayo Nagashima and Mayumi Ozaki in the teeth to allow KAORU to hit the fricking greatest EXCALIBUR in the history of gnarly female Neck-Bending. KAORU finally makes like the cutest Ronnie Garvin ever by punching Sugar in the face for the pin.

Chigusa Nagayo/Toshie Uematsu vs. Devil Masami/Chikayo Nagashima:

GAEA is based on a booking blueprint of 1980s All Japan Women. That blueprint is based on some pretty old fashioned ideas of how you book angles in wrestling. It's based on blood, blood hatred, blood feuds, slow logical developement of fueds to very finite blow-offs; heel stables that are cool in their evilness, good and pure faces with deep fighting spirit and giant numbers of the roster activated in one overlying angle. It's based on rock-solid, psychologically-sound, old school-soaked, stiff wrestling. A match like this is pretty much what Chigusa usually shoots for- in that it's pretty much a tag-team match that is in reality a ten man match with each faction having everyone outside the ring beating the hell out of each other and elongating the match by making illegal saves. It worked as a huge heat generating formula with Jaguar vs the Monster Ripper/Galactica axis, was perfected with the Matsumoto Gang vs the Crush Gals, and

Chigusa has been reinventing it to great success in the new Millenium. Here, Devil continues to finally work her way into my heart- as she erases a thousand suck-ass SuperHeel Masami matches by selling for Uematsu and by taking a big batch of nastiness with a Death Valley Driver from Chigusa and superstiff corner dropkick to the face from Uematsu. Chigusa blades like Chigusa and gets the neat half crimson mask that only a true bladfreak like Chigusa can pull off at will. This match is another in a growing style of GAEA match where the elder wrestlers advance whatever angle they need to advance and then let the youngsters pretty much wrestle the body of the match. Uematsu and Nagashima have some nifty exchanges as Uematsu counters out of or escapes Nagashima's Northern Lights Bomb finisher, while Uematsu does a neat array of straitjacket and wristlock suplexes. After hitting Nagashima in the face, she does a very cool Side Capture Suplex. Quite okay little match.

Meiko Satomura/ Sakura Hirota vs. Lioness Asuka/ Sonoko Kato:

Sonoko Kato and Meiko Satomura have an awesome one minute section in this- as they counter a hundred mat moves and take a hundred kicks in the midst of going on a total wrestling tear. Then the horror of Hirota and that goshdarn hilarious FUNNY COMEDY ACT comes in and makes the whole match reek of regurgitated Tsubo Genjin COMEDY JOKES! Fuck this shit. Satomura and Kato kinda stand outside trying to stay awake while Hirota does 8 minutes on airline food to the thorough delight of Lioness and the rubes at ringside. Watch the minute of wrestling and then just start playing that Carrot Top tape you have cued up in your other VCR. See, when UltraVixen Assbeaters like Hikari Fukuoka were roaming the great Joshi wrestling plains, comedy acts like this would become palatable because you had seen them get Moonsault Stomped after being beaten straight to hell- or at least you knew that said stompdawn was eventually forthcoming. With Hirota, you get a great big cinch sak of NOTHING. YEEEEEEEEEEEEESH!

Mayumi Ozaki vs. Sakura Hirota:

Hirota! HAHA! It's funny! She should wrestle Ken The Box! See, this is my beef with all these Hirota matches: at some point she should have ditched the comedy entrances and actually gotten mad at some of the evil heels that are tearing Chigusa's life apart. It's like she is no-selling the entire booking of GAEA when she and Ozaki yuck it up in a comedy match and it's all cute and shit. GET WITH THE PROGRAM, LADY! GAEA IS ABOUT HATE AND BLOOD AND BEING ALLLLLLLL THE BITCH YOU CAN BE! I'm assuming the genius that is Chigusa is gonna play off that angle when Hirota runs out of things to keep the rubes amused. That'll make it all worthwhile if Hirota could ever develop any watchable offense at all.

Aja Kong/Kaoru vs. Toshiyo Yamada/Meiko Satomura:

This was the best angle you could ever see. It's a whole wrestling match and the whole point is that it developed more interest in ANOTHER wrestling match- the Aja vs Meiko throwdown at the Crush Gals Reunion. Since this is GAEA and GAEA is best motherfucking wrestling promotion on earth in about every area, you don't notice that this is just a match to set-up another match. Whereas a shithead, useless degenerate like Russo would have a two minute match and a thousand run-ins to set-up a six minute match that would be as useless as the two minute match, Chigusa uses a tagmatch that boils down the issue of Aja being the True MAN of

Joshi and Meiko being the True FUTURE of Joshi and the FUTURE is ready to become the PRESENT of Joshi by putting the True MAN of Joshi out to pasture. It boils down to Aja and Meiko trying to knock each other out while Yamada and KAORU stay out of the way and don't make the customary thousand saves that permeate Joshi since time immortal. Aja crushes and crushes Meiko's skull with Brainbusters and Uricans, while Meiko slaughters Aja with Death Valley Drivers and Somersault Frontkicks that Aja leans into like Aja will do. THIS IS WHAT REAL PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING IS ABOUT. It's not about stupid marriage angles and cretins doing SHOOT! PROMOS! ON THE STICK! It's about who is the baddest motherfucker in the fucking ring and Aja fuckin Kong is the baddest motherfucker in the ring. Meiko Satomura is a bad motherfucker in the ring and wants to prove that she is the baddest motherfucker in the ring by beating the baddest motherfucker in the ring. THAT, my beloved Death Valley Driver Video Review reader, is Jumbo vs Misawa, DiBiase vs Terry Taylor, Chigusa vs Dump. It's the coolest story in wrestling and sets up the most compelling matches. If the Man is REALLY the Man- and AJA is SOOOOOO the MAN- and if your Future Man is really the Future Man- and Meiko is SOOOOO the Future Man- it should be a long harrowing, compelling story. I'm hoping that this becomes fully realized like Misawa- Tsurta and Chigusa-Dump, as opposed to abandoned like the circumstances that didn't allow DiBiase -Taylor run it's course.

Ultimate Ultimate 12-16-95

by MIKE NAIMARK

When the first UFC debuted in November of 1993, the idea of truly mixed martial-arts competition was a novel one in North America. The American public, weaned on Bruce Lee's chop-socky and mincing ballet reject Jean Claude Van Damm's laughable 'Bloodsport' (1), assumed that the guy with the 'deadliest' kicks and best focus of Qi would rapidly dispatch his competition. Well, at least I *think* the fans thought that. It certainly seemed like the fighters did, as the early UFC tournaments were loaded with some of the goofiest excuses for fighters to ever 'get it on'. Want your shadow-creeping ninja? Scott Morris, UFC2. Monster sumo blubberpots? Telio Tuli, UFC1 and Manny Yarborough, UFC3. Mystical Wing-Chun Kung-Fu? Scott Baker, UFC2. And don't even get into the hosts of no-talent bullyboys swaggering into the Octagon to pimp such laughable myths as SAFTA, Trapfighting, and most horribly of all, JoSonDo (2). The one thing all these posers had in common was that they justifiably received asswhippings when the reality of MMA met against their own bogus notions about the true nature of fighting. But as you might expect from an American population so used to dominating international competitions, American fighters took their beatings and licked their wounds while Royce Gracie deftly pretzeled them into submission. As time passed in the UFC, fewer fighters came to the Octagon with merely a black belt and a bloated ego. Gone were the likes of Fred Ettish (3) and Art Jimmerson, replaced with a newer breed of fighter, still far from complete, but slowly incorporating efficacious aspects of two or more fighting styles to help defend themselves against the diverse assaults that existed in the MMA world.

And as the MMA world turned in North America, this one event, the Ultimate Ultimate 1995 became what was in my view the pivot point for American fighters and American fighting.

Originally conceived as a 'Tournament of Champions', this even featured what can probably be considered to be the best fighters to have appeared in the UFC up until that time. Some may point to Ken Shamrock's exclusion from the field, but I will address this later in the report. Think of UUFC'95 as the 'Last Hurrah' for the old guard of the UFC, because from this point onward, American fighters only got better conditioned, more versatile, and better acquainted with the harsh realities of the Octagon. Lets head to the ring, where announcer Rich 'The Man With A Dozen Lane Nicknames' Goins (4) is about to butcher the styles and names of fighters all night long! Your ringside announcers include 1984 Gold Medal wrestler Jeff Blatnick and Karate legend Don 'The Dragon' Wilson, both of whom show a clear lack of knowledge about MMA as the night progresses. Lets go down to the Octagon, where the \$150,000 tournament is about to begin!

Tank Abbott (Finalist, UFC6) v Steve Jennum (UFC4 Champion):

One of the things I miss about the current UFC product is the hilarious interviews sprinkled through early UFCs as the fighters tried to 'get themselves over' as tough guys. Tank never disappoints in the area, and tells the camera with a grin that the reason he's at the UUFC is "Because I want to hurt people and not go to jail". Steve Jennum is widely considered to be the most undeserving UFC champion in history, waltzing into a finals matchup with mulletmaster Harold Howard (5) and walking out with the UFC4 title. Jennum resembles Lance Storm quite a bit, and the announcers remind us that Jennum is still an active police officer in Nebraska. What is Jennum's fighting style. you ask? Its ninjitsu. Oh my.....

Tank charges across the ring and fires a wide right, quickly locking up with the smaller Jennum and driving him to the fence. Tank rips Jennum's legs from under him and lands in the guard, ready to ground-n-pound, but Jennum flukes his way into pushing Tank back with his legs. Tank smirks and dives back into the guard, and here we see some vintage Tank brutality. Raising himself up on his toes in the guard, Tank scoots Jennum right against the fence and begins to grind his skull into Jennum's face against the fence. The crowd is rabid for the big brawler, as loud chants of 'Tank' erupt through the arena. Jennum's face is contorted in a twisted purple grimace, and after maybe 15 seconds of Tank's head crushing his cheek, weakly taps out. As Tank backs away and releases Jennum, you can see the clear impressions of chain link embedded in Jennum's face. It took all of 75 seconds for Tank to dispose of this former UFC champion. (6) Jennum shoulda brought the rest of the Ninja clan with him, although I don't doubt that Tank would have clobbered them all as they attacked one at a time.

Dan Severn (UFC5 champion) v Paul Varelans (Finalist, UFC7)

More swell interview time for the two men. DVDVR fave Paul Varelans glowers into the camera and promises, "No more Mr Nice Guy". Severn delivers a hilariously earnest wrestling-style promo where he promises to once again "release the Beast". According to the UFC's video stat sheet on Paul Varelans, his style is "freestyle"(7), he is a "wild puncher"(8), possesses "heavy knees and elbows"(9), and has "limited submissions"(10). I might add that he's gotten his ass kicked severely on three continents and is a reminder of what would happen if The Big Slow or Kevin Nash ever got involved with MMA.

Now, if you were a 6'8 330lb lummoX like Paul Varelans, and you were fighting a highly-skilled grappler like Dan Severn, how would you open the fight? If you said circle and wait for Severn to expose himself on a shoot, go sit in the corner. If you said try and use his superior size and leverage to Greco-Roman grapple Severn to the fence, hang your head in shame. If you said throw a leg kick because you've never thrown a leg kick and Severn wouldn't be expecting it, give yourself a shiny gold star and stay away from a career as a fighter.(11) Severn almost wets his tights in glee as the lumbering Varelans slowly lifts his meaty leg for one of the weakest kicks ever delivered in the UFC. Severn quickly shoots and takes Varelans to the mat with a single leg. Severn moves smoothly to the side-mount and grabs a head-and-arm on the confused Polar Bear. After about 30 seconds of constant pressure from Severn, Varelans taps out. Hey Paul, at least you tapped out to a real fighter like Severn. Ain't like you're tapping out to a spud like Taz. Not yet.....

Dave Bennetau (Finalist, UFC5) v Oleg Taktarov (UFC6 Champion)

This is a rematch of their UFC5 match, in which Bennetau dominated early but Taktarov shocked the crowd with an acrobatic move on the ground into a guillotine choke. Bennetau, a wrestler/boxer hybrid hailing from Windsor....Ontario Canada, stares intently at the camera and warns Oleg, in Russian, to beware. Oleg's interview, delivered in broken english, rivals any interview in UFC history for its earnest bombast - "My friends, I know, I know for sure everybody here scared of me. (12)" Bennetau opens with a quick shoot for a single leg, but Oleg is wise to the surprise and stays standing. They grapple on their feet briefly, with Bennetau looking to grab a waistlock, when suddenly Oleg nose-dives for the canvas. The next thing Bennetau knows, this pesky Russian is wrapped so tightly around his leg that he's helpless. Oleg's execution of this traditional sambo move (called a Tartarkin roll) is absolutely flawless, to say nothing of brilliant (13). Bennetau even resorts to kicking Tartarov with his shoes on, a clear violation of UUFC rules, before tapping out. Oleg Tartarov has beaten Bennetau twice in around a minute each time.

Marco Ruas (UFC7 Champion) v Keith Hackney (UFC4 semi-finalist)

Of course, we know why Marco Ruas was invited to UUFC95, since he won the last UFC tournament before UUFC95. But Hackney? Well, Hackney was a favorite of the early UFCs, owing to his hilarious domination of 660lb porker Manny Yarborough, his 'wack-a-sack' tactics against Joe Son, and a surprisingly strong showing against Royce Gracie. For his big UUFC matchup, Hackney looks to have gained 30lbs of injectible muscle, which should compliment those deadly Kempo Karate skills quite nicely. I can transcribe Ruas' entire video interview. "Eh? The time has come."

The men circle in the middle of the ring, Hackney showing those herky-jerky hand movements that befuddle clods like Joe Son and Manny Yarborough, but against a seasoned pro like RUas, its all just wasted motion. Ruas shoots after a missed Hackney right hand (14) and quickly forces the action against the fence. Hackney turns to grab the fence and stay standing, but Ruas literally leaps on his back and drags the karate master to the ground. From here, the Brazilian takes over in earnest, pounding Hackney's head with fists and elbows until he can sink

in the dreaded rear-naked choke for the tapout. Another one-sided blowout in the opening round of UUFC95. Don't worry, this won't last.

As the fighters prepare for the start of the semi-finals, we have an interview with none other than Kimo, he of the big cross and killer tattoos. Remember that at this point, Kimo's only exposure to the UFC fanbase was his admittedly outstanding showing against Royce Gracie in UFC3. Kimo is hyped as facing Ken Shamrock at the next UFC, UFC8 in Puerto Rico. Before he can answer any question, Kimo insists on praising his Lord, Jesus Christ (15). Kimo then follows this solemn proclamation with the ridiculous claim that he's been "working on technique" since his debut in the UFC, a statement that is particularly laughable since his career spiraled into the turder after a series of lousy fights against such loads as Paul Varelans. Still, Kimo can always claim to have beaten Bam Bam Bigelow in a real fight, which might impress some of the boy in the WCW locker room, or maybe not .

Semi Finals - Tank Abbott v Dan Severn

Abbott opens with his usual clubbing right, leading to the predictable Severn shoot. Tank sprawls and actually lands a nice kneestrike to Severn's head as they jockey for position on the mat. Tank manages to free himself and stand again. Severn shoots in again, this time grabbing a waistlock and taking Tank to the ground. Tank turtles, face down, ass-up, as Severn tries a couple of meaningless punches. Severn quickly changes his strategy and waits for Tank to make his move. And sure enough, when Tank tries to turn, Severn swings around him deftly and grabs a picturesque front chancery. From here, Severn sprawls, cranks Tank's neck, and quickly swings back around to the classic 'ride' position. A VERY nice grappling sequence from Severn, which means absolutely nothing in MMA, but is laudible nonetheless. And here's where the fight stays as the minutes tick by. Severn stays in 'ride' position, slapping and smacking Abbott's head and ears, while Abbott stays in the defensive turtle position absorbing punishment. After 17 minutes of fighting action, Tank catches Severn napping and clambers, open-mouthed and panting, to his feet. Severn grabs the waistlock again and Tank hangs on the fence for dear life. The crowd comes alive with racous chants of 'Tank! Tank!' as Abbott tries vainly to launch some offense, but with Severn behind him trying to drag him down, he can only manage a couple of grazing elbows. Severn actually throws some nicely effective kneestrikes to Tank's legs as the time expires. Before the judges decision is even announced, Tank leaps over the Octagon fence and walks to the locker room, clearly dejected. Tank would go on to say that he had a nightmare he was raped by Freddie Mercury at UUFC95, which might be quite a zinger where Tank is concerned, but there is no doubt that he was sadly outclassed on the ground by Severn's technique (16).

SemiFinals - Marco Ruas vs. Oleg Taktarov

When watching this fight live with a group of friends, I boldly predicted that the winner of this fight would go on to win the tournament with ease. Both men stride to the center of the ring and circle slowly. Now, if you know anything about Oleg, you know two things - he knows more about leglocks than a closet full of Gracies, and he bleeds after a hard sneeze (17). Now Ruas is a seasoned vet of the stand-up world, a multi-time Brazilian Muay-Thai champ and self proclaimed 'King of the Street' (although I've heard it told that when Rickson Gracie was walking

the Street, Marco became King of the Sidestreet. But you didn't heard that from me). Oleg is definately NOT a seasoned striker, but don't you tell the gutty Oleg that! He loves to throw the big bombs, and he tends to receive the big bombs as well (18). Watching him circle Ruas with his hands just above his navel reminds me why Oleg bleeds so much. They eventually lockup and grapple to the fence, where Ruas unleashes those foot stomps he made famous against Paul Varelans in the finals of UFC7. Oleg dances a little jig to keep his feet clear, and suddenly drops down - TARTARKIN ROLL again! And he's got Ruas's leg trapped and ready to be cranked! Ruas rolls furiously to take the pressure off his ankle while Oleg tries to hang on to the slippery Brazilian. Ruas finally manages to free his leg and ends up in Oleg's guard, which our Gold-Medalist commentator identifies as "the mount". Its true, its true (19). Ruas keeps his face down in the mount and begins to pepper Oleg's ribs with chopping punches, but Oleg absorbs the damage in order to reach above his head, grab the Octagon fence, and pull himself to his feet from under Ruas' very body! The crowd roars its approval for the fearless Russian. As they circle in the ring, the camera shows that Oleg is ALREADY bleeding! And I can't recall a single punch of significance landing thus far in the fight! Ruas works the whip-kicks from the perimeter and they feel each other out. Oleg continues to hold his hands slightly above waist-level; this poor defense never seemed so dangerous before I watched the head-crackin' goodness of K-1, but now it seems positively suicidal. Oleg takes initiative and flurries with wide arm-punches, forcing Ruas back to the fence. Ruas ducks and goes for a waistlock, but Oleg is on his game and neatly grabs the diving Ruas with a guillotine choke. The choke secure from the standing position, Oleg promptly leaps, wraps his legs around Ruas, and drags him into the guard while cranking the choke! And for nearly one full minute, Taktarov cranks his choke on Ruas, who tries desperately to tuck his chin and save his neck from the relentless pressure. The crowd is frantic waiting for the tap-out, but Ruas fools them all, and after a seeming eternity in the choke, Ruas manages to slip an arm under Oleg's arms and releive the pressure on his throat. Both men are breathing heavily and open-mouthed in the thin Colorado air, and after a moment of inactivity, referee Big John McCarthy stands both men up, ostensibly to allow the ringside physician to inspect Oleg's usual assortment of lacerations and traumatic injuries. Oleg gets the 'thumbs up' and Big John prepares to restart the fight with his trademarked catchphrase, but before Big John can even say the second, "Are you ready?", Oleg staggers to the center of the ring. Big John actually SHOVES Oleg back into the corner, and shoves him abruptly. Hey McCarthy you big goon, everyone in this building and the millions watching live on PPV know that you wouldn't have a snowball's chance in Miami of hanging with either of these guys for 5 minutes. Stop trying to flex like you're something other than a glorified Explorer Scout teaching LA cops how to best swing their nightsticks at civilians. Greg Stott taught Army Rangers how to kick ass, and you saw what happened to him (20).

Back to the fight, Big John finally gets to say his famous "Lets get it on" for the cameras, and the fight continues. Both men move slowly and timidly in the center of the ring, and the two men continue to circle each other, without offense until the fight ends. Yes, the dreaded Shamrock v Severn Waltz, two full UFCs before its time. Oleg is given a unanimous decision based on his attempted kneebar, ankle lock, and choke. He staggers back to the dressing room to await his matchup with Dan Severn.

In the meantime, Marco Ruas and his 'manager/translator' are demanding an interview. Now this is sorta weird, this manager-type, who I once heard referred to as 'Sergio', has the whole Latino Rudo Playboy look going on, with the greased ponytail and natty suit. And when Jeff Blatnick asks Ruas what he thought about the decision, Ruas relays to Sergio that he felt the judges were incompetent. Then he claimed that Oleg should have lost because of his cuts. And as if this delisional bunkum wasn't enough, Sergio tells Jeff Blatnick, "You know everything about martial arts" (21). And the kicker is this - as the interview continues, Marco Ruas is responding to questions with maybe one sentence worth of verbiage, and then must wait for Sergio to cease his elaborate and crazed ranting. A Brazilian physician told me last year that Ruas' comments weren't nearly as inflammatory as 'Sergio' made them out to be.

Killing more time to give Oleg a breather, Ken 'The Sham' Shamrock joins the announcing team for the main event. Shamrock immediately begins making excuses for why he never even advanced to a tournament *finals*, yet was the UFC Superfight Champ. Shamrock claimed his success in Japan, and the fact that Royce Gracie only beat him one time out of two, made him the champion. Well, that wasn't a direct quote from The Sham, but that was the jist of it (22).

UFC95 FINALS - Dan Severn vs. Oleg Takatrov:

As the main event starts, I note that Oleg Taktarov has had 18 minutes to rest after his time-limit match against Ruas, while Severn has had almost an hour. As they approach each other in the middle of the ring, they engage in a UFC lowlight - a girlish slapfight with both men throwing weak strikes and keeping their chins out of harms way. Severn comes away with a waistlock, and looks to manuver Oleg away from the fence for a possible suplex when...Oleg ducks, locks his feet behind Severn's knee, grabs the ankle, TARTARKIN ROLL again! And he's got it sunk in deeply on Severn's extended leg! Severn sits up and begins rolling madly with the pressure, trying to keep the feisty Ruskie from yanking his leg off, Halme-style. Oleg feels his grip slipping on Severn's leg and decides to take half-guard instead. This had to be a major disappointment for Oleg, as he was easily seconds away from a quick submission and now has to settle for half-guard. I've often wonder if this fight might have ended differently had Oleg gotten a more reasonable amount of rest in preparation for the finals. Severn starts slapping and grabbing from the half guard, and Oleg is bleeding *again*. Severn even throws a sad-looking headbutt! Its MADMAN DAN on the mat, and you know Severn watched Rocky IV in the locker room as he throws every slap and grope in his arsenal at Oleg. Oleg keeps trying to scoot around and grab Severn's leg from the side, but Severn blocks his pivoting numerous times. The seconds tick away as Severn flails at the bloody Russian, causing little real damage but spattering the mat with blood. At 15 minutes in the fight, McCarthy stands the fighter up to have Takatrov's eye inspected. Oleg gets another clean bill of health and then gets thwarted on a shoot, ending up with the half-guard again. After 5 minutes of limited action, the referee stands them up again to inspect the wounds on Oleg's face, now consisting of a small cut above the right eye, and a huge, angry-looking mouse over the left. The fight resumes as Ken Shamrock and Don Wilson argue about what it feels like to be hit in the head. Oleg takes full guard against Severn and the fight stays there until time expires. The winner is announced as being a unanimous decision - for your winner and ULTIMATE ULTIMATE CHAMPION - DAN SEVERN (23)!

And there you have it - the end of an era in American MMA. This was clearly the highlight of Dan Severn's MMA career, which, when you look at it (two time-limit wins, including one over an exhausted opponent), ain't that impressive. From here on, the entire roster from UUFC would slowly melt into MMA obscurity. Hackney and Jennum never set foot in the Octagon again. Varelans career continued the same comedic path foretold by the stars, Tank Abbott suffered humiliating losses to Vitor Belfort and Maurice Smith, and Oleg Taktarov, so valiant in defeat at UUFC95, would go on to be on the wrong end of some of the most frightening knockouts in fighting history. Severn ended up having his listless farce against Ken Shamrock at UFC9, which just prolonged Severn's UFC viability until Mark Coleman pulled his head off at UFC12. The next UFC, UFC8, debuted a boxer-wrestler hybrid by the name of Don Frye who went on to dominate the tournament and become one of the most respected and well-rounded fighters in the sport. Soon, Mark Coleman would take everything that Dan Severn did in the ring and crush it under a hail of murderous punches. And on the horizon, young fighters who learned lessons too new to be taken seriously by old hands like Severn. What will the next generation of fighters think as they view the work of Kevin Randleman, Bas Rutten, or Frank Shamrock? Maybe they'll wonder why the fighters of this era never understood the finer points of focusing your Qi to hurl fireballs and defy gravity.

??/?/?/All Pro Wrestling Click Movies (1/00-6/00)
(SCHNEIDER)

Thanks to the benevolence of temporary work(1). I was able to download and watch some All Pro Wrestling from earlier this year(2). The matches were quite the mixed bag although one match was a legitimate Match of the Year contender(3).

BALLARD BROTHERS vs. WEST SIDE PLAYAZ 2000 (1/25/00):

The Ballard Brothers are a SoCal Indy team who do a Hanson Brothers gimmick(4). The West Side Playaz are zaftig veteran Robert Thompson and up and coming star Boyce LeGrande, they are easily one of the top five teams in the U.S. right now(5). This was a very basic U.S. tag match(6) and was pretty well done, although there was some sloppy spots between Thompson and the Ballards. WSP2K bust out some pretty nice double teams including a springboard leg drop combo, assisted tope-con-hilo and a double doomsday device blockbuster(7). Not super mainly do to the mediocrity of the Ballards but a fine little tag match nonetheless.

CHRISTOPHER DANIELS vs. BOYCE LEGRANDE (2/5/00)

Daniels starts the match by cutting a killer promo(8), while Boyce and Icebox(9) just holler "WESTSIDE." Daniels started the match in full Zybzo stall mode(10). The beginning of the match had LeGrande working over Daniels arm with some nice moves, although it didn't really lead anywhere. The main part of the match started after LeGrande hit a sweet tope-con-hilo, he then missed a lariat and toasted his arm on the guardrail. Daniels then spent the match working over the arm, with LeGrande doing a good job of selling it(11). LeGrande does take control again briefly hitting a rocking combo; swanton bomb(12) from one corner into a moonsault from the other, but held his arm instead of covering. He then hit a crossbody block from the top which Daniels from the bottom turned into a keylock for the submission. This was a good match, and I

dug the psychology of the finish, but there were a couple of things which kept it from really breaking out. Daniels is a master at crafting intricate counters and reversal sequences and writing great match finishes(13), there wasn't much of that in this match, and Daniels limited his great offense to moves which worked on the arm. While the ending worked well in the context of the match story, I was looking forward to seeing Boyce and Daniels mix it up with a hotter ending.

MIKE MODEST vs. FRANK MURDOCH (5/6/00)

I was really excited for this match as both guys can mat wrestle like motherfuckers when inspired(14), but boy gosh golly was this an overbooked mess. The original match was supposed to be Boom Boom Comini versus Murdoch, but Comini gets jumped by the Shoot Club(15) and gets his arm injured. Boom Boom brings out Modest as his surprise and they have a title match. The actual wrestling part of this match was pretty good, as Modest and Murdoch traded some really stiff chops(16), and Modest hit a nice exploder, but then the ghost of Dusty Rhodes kicks in(17). Modest rakes Murdochs eyes and a blinded Murdoch gives the ref a German Suplex(18) Modest hits two running Death Valley Drivers, but the ref is down so he can't get the pin. The Shoot Club attacks and gets fought off by Modest and a chair wielding Comini(19). Modest picks up the chair and Murdoch, seeing that the ref was coming to, starts rolling on the ground faking getting chairshot, the ref seeing this DQ's Modest with Murdoch keeping the belt(20). Comini and Modest then beat up the ref, with Comini even remembering to sell the arm after giving the ref a splash . A big example of useless overbooking ruining a match, all this crap didn't even lead to anything, as Modest turned heel later in the show and Comini joined the Shoot Club on the next show(21). I would like to see a straight Murdoch v. Modest match, and this assuredly wasn't it.

WEST SIDE PLAYAZ 2000 vs. JARDI FRANZ/VINNY MASSARO (5/6/00)

This was one of the best matches in APW history(22) and a legitimate USMOTYC(23). Jordi Franz is a young highflyer who looks like Evan Koragis(24) while Massaro is a portly APW Superworker(25), while WSP we know and love. The match started with Massaro and Boyce pairing off and they did a nice sequence which was highlighted by Boyce doing a cartwheel to counter a stunner(26). Boyce becomes FIP(27) when he gets pushed off the top rope to the floor(28). Franz and Massaro work over LeGrande for a while, including a nice running Liger Bomb by Massaro, until the hot tag. The start a mini highspot train with an awesome assisted tope-con-hilo by Boyce and the springboard shooting star press to the floor by Franz(29). At this point the match was approaching 20 minutes and they went into an extended AJW or Toryuman style finisher sequence, including a running Air Raid Bomb(30) and Viagra Driver(31) by Massaro, springboard dropkick by Franz into a Massaro DDT, and a bunch of cool double teams by the WSP2K(32). The end finally came with Boyce hitting a swanton bomb off a ladder for the pin. One especially cool thing about this match is that the psychology was actually better than in most AJW or Toryuman spot fests. When the finisher was hit, the partner would break up the pin and then work a sequence with the guy that hit the move, this would allow the guy hit with the finisher to sell it, rather than just leap up and continue working. Almost all the moves were hit crisply, and even the green Franz stepped it up. Just a great match and well worth the download time.

BATTLE ROYAL (6/2/00)

As a rule Battle Royals suck nuts(33) but this wasn't the worst thing ever. There was some nice work between Mike Modest and Funboy Donovan Morgan including a Morgan tope and some Modest chairshots. Some rookies took awkward bumps, I think Tony Jones threw a suplex or two, it wasn't bad considering the limitation of the genre. The match came down to Mike Modest, Frank Murdoch and Vinny Massaro, with the last two guys in the ring fighting the WSP2000 for the tag belts. Massaro and Murdoch double team Modest which includes Massaro giving him a running Bitch Slap. The the match goes swirling down the toilet as Murdoch breaks out his new finisher THE CLAW!?!(34) And they have a whole sequence with Modest fighting out of the claw, in the year fucking 2000. Modest fights back and eliminates Murdoch to give the win to him and Massaro. Massaro then gets on the STICK~!(35) and bitches out Modest for stealing his moves on Nitro(36). They make up and agree to fight the WSP later tonight(37).

TONY JONES vs. DONOVAN MORGAN (6/2/00)

Morgan came out earlier during ANGLEMANIA(38) and gets dumped on his head by Jones, so he is defending the Internet title hurt. Basic big guy vs. Little guy match(39) which is marred by constant Shoot Club interference. These two haven't really melded before(40), and this wasn't much better. It wasn't bad or anything, but the extracurricular stuff pretty much ruined for me.

TONY SPEAKS OF OLD SCHOOL

Ric Flair vs. Jack Brisco

Mid-Atlantic TV, c. 1982

Anthony Gancarski

Prologue: Though I dig most Flair angles(1), for whatever reason the story leading up to this left me cold. Flair didnt want to wrestle a jobber, essentially, so Wahoo McDaniel confronts the heel world champ. Flair balks at wrestling Wahoo, saying that he has an opponent in the ring, and Wahoo is powerless to charge Flair with Kelly Kiniski and Mike Rotunda holding him back (2). Whatever and ever amen, if it aint Jack Brisco in the ring, ready for an impromptu match that could be a main event anywhere in the world. Quite a contrivance to set up a match between the next big thing in the sport and a legend that was arguably a better entertainer than Buddy Rogers and a better wrestler than Lou Thesz. But this would be the promotion that would counter Rock and Wrestling with Pez Whatley morphing into Shaska (3), so there we go, the NWA wasnt all great rasslin, and so forth (4).

Flair stalls and screams for a bit before getting in the ring to face Brisco, whose face is definitely showing years (5). Brisco moves toward a lockup, but Flair ducks between the ropes. Not a bit of irony in it either, in sharp contrast to many later heel exponents of the 70s style who act like theyre pulling one over on the face by "stretching the rules" or whatever. In five seconds, Flair has managed to establish Brisco as a legit threat; this is why hes the man.

Collar and elbow. Flair backs Brisco into the ropes, and rather than break he presses for advantage. Brisco counters, though, firing Flair across the ring and shoulder blocking him upon his return. Brisco runs the ropes, leaping over the prone Flair. Flair up, leapfrogs over the still running Brisco. Flair catches Brisco coming off the ropes, attempts a hiptoss only to find it blocked; Brisco counters with an abdominal stretch.

Flair sells the drama and the agony of the hold, and ironic that Mike Rotunda played a bit role in the set-up to this considering how flat and dead his use of the stretch was throughout the 90s; from the get-go, Flair shakes his head, and the astute viewer again realizes that there is no such thing as overselling in a Flair match, and that Flair perhaps is the perfect Roland Barthes "World of Wrestling"(6) performer. Brisco slides Flair into a crucifix from the stretch; the pin is broken up by the ropes.

Flair retreats to a distant corner, and balls up his fists. This isn't Japan, so the crowd doesn't applaud the sequence (7). C and E. Brisco with an armdrag, into the armbar, and I'm struck by how this match is a time-compressed version of the Funk/Brisco template. Brisco stands with the armbar for leverage and Flair makes his feet. Flair whips Brisco into the ropes, and attempts an armdrag; no dice, as the veteran blocks and counters with his own. Armbar, again, and Brisco wrenches the limb, stepping over for pressure, constantly moving to instill drama in the resthold.

Flair makes his feet and backs Brisco into a corner. A couple of shoulder-blocks and then a stiff chop, sold by Brisco as if it were Flair himself selling. Flair whip, Brisco reversal, and Flair bumps against the opposite corner, selling the upper arm previously armbarred. Brisco back with more tenderizing of the limb, jamming his knee into the tricep, working the arm until Flair is back up and manages to knee Brisco in the breadbasket.

The champ back on offense. Positions Brisco against the ropes and whacks him with the tomahawk chop. Whip and reversal by the old man, who comes back with an armdrag and then a short-arm scissors. Flair attempts to tumble out of the hold and the wrestlers flip around the ring, conjoined by the armhold, in a manner every bit as graceful as Malenko and Eddy trading pinning combinations. The rolling stops, but the scissors remains; Flair powers out and rolls Brisco up for two. Then another two Brisco pretzeled here then a rope-assisted two. Then Brisco leaps up and the wrestlers square off once more, Flair balling his fists, and then just as quickly abandoning the posture.

C and E. Flair with the advantage, backing Brisco into a corner. Flair's punch is blocked; Brisco's haymaker lands. Flair staggers, then comes back with chops; Brisco gets the better of him with overhand lefts, as the champ staggers and rocks. Flair flop. Brisco works a leg for a bit, but Flair back quickly with a headbutt to the underbelly.

Irish whip by Flair, but Brisco back with a flying bodypress for two. Flair kicks out, and Brisco quixotically rolls out to the floor. Brisco back up to the apron, but the champ rams his head into

the turnbuckle. The champ is in control outside the ring, as any self-respecting southern-heel would be (8).

Back in the ring. Flair with a scoop slam. Kneedrop. Pulling piledriver, and a weak kickout at two. Chop, Irish whip into an elbow. Flair lifts him for the vertical suplex, Brisco slides out, reverses with a sleeper. Flair counters with a back suplex (9), then with a kneebreaker. Figure-four by the champ; Brisco reverses, and Caudle fails to sell the significance of the reversal on commentary (10).

Flair is out on his back. Brisco works the leg until Flair comes back with an eyerake. Scoop slam, then Flair goes up top with predictable results, setting up a Brisco figure-four that Flair immediately rolls out of.

Both men to their feet. Flair works a small-package for two. Flair with a hiptoss; Brisco counters with a head-scissors. Flair presses Brisco back to belly for two, but Brisco bridges out, and I can't help but think of Flair/Benoit from WCW TV in 1999, where a very similar sequence was worked (11). Brisco powers Flair into a backslide, and just like that gets the non-title three count over the champ.

This is, of course, classic in every imaginable way, and instructive at the same time: we see the Crockett trope of establishing the contender through a non-title victory, and in this match we see echoes of the old-school Funk/Brisco classics and harbingers of little things that would come to play in the Flair/Steamboat feud of 1989. One of the many things that disappointed about fin de siècle WCW was its insistence in programming Flair as a joke. He not only couldn't teach the kids psychology and exposition, but was the last working link between the great feuds of the past and the contemporary wrestling climate. But instead we got one Flair/Jericho match on Thunder, a few cups of coffee between Flair/Benoit on WCW telecasts that led nowhere anyone can remember at this point, and a Flair/Eddy feud that was overshadowed by the things that sold t-shirts. And the end result of all this? WCW pushes tag teams that don't even know how tag matches work (cf. Jindrak and O'Hair) and relegates real workers to Viagra on a Pole Matches and 4 minute World Title matches. Never turn your back on the Wolfpac, brah, cos its always 4:20 somewhere.

~!~

%^%^%^%^%^ GAEA G-PANIC! 5/14/2000

(DEAN RASMUSSEN)

Dynamite Kansai vs. Sakura Hirota:

Y'know, I got no beef with Hirota as she's quite the best possible Yone genjin and stuff and her lil skits coming to ring are kinda neat sometimes because they Make FUN of her oppo... AH FUCK THIS SHIT. MOTHERFUCKING KANSAI DOESN'T BEAT THE FUCKING HELL OUT OF HIROTA?!?! THIS MATCH FUCKING SUCKS IT. Fuckin' Kansai doesn't beat the shit out of her? What the FUCK is this Godforsaken worrld...whirl coming to? Fuck. (1)

Saika Takeuchi vs. RIE:

RIE and COOGA retire in the same year- is it possible that it's a coincidence? Could the two most mediocre wrestlers in Joshi have some kind of pact to open a fabric store together in Ogawa or something. RIE was the fourth hottest chick in FMW (for whatever reason we'll discount Megumi Kudo because she is too far ahead of the crowd to be grouped as a real FMW sleazoid beauty. Run with me here.) YES SHE WAS, BOYO! Ya got the chesticulary-engrossing Nakayama, you got the Funtastic and Strangely accessible-seeming MISS MONGOL, you had the TRUE trailerpark skank-heaven Miwa Sato- who was basically that pasty girl in your gym class that would never dress out and who dated your crank-addicted redneck friend- Bobby- because he could always get some off of her. the match itself is like their previous encounter with RIE hitting her super lowgrade garbage spots and Taneuchi taking the bumps necessary to make it work better than usual- as before. Takeuchi gets her first win with a nice Tiger Suplex and RIE rides off into the sunset- luckily for her as a member of OZ Academy than a member of the MadDog Military. Godspeed, my Bad Bad Nurse...

Kyoko Inoue vs. Toshiyo Yamada:

Talk about two Joshi legends going in different directions. Yamada was crippled by AJW in the 90s so she jumped to GAEA where she could actually heal her body and continue her career. She's learned to wrestle smart- switching stupid highsots with stiffness and psychology and has assumed a roll at a level higher than KAORU but in the same capacity as KAORU- to teach the youngsters how to work and to give them a step to the upper card. She is a real company woman and Chigusa is getting great mileage out of her- as her match with Toshie Uematsu can testify. She's got the juice and she can carry anyone- that's what your experienced veterans should do. Meanwhile, Kyoko is a really different than when she is young (2). She can't do the high-flying (3) anymore for some reason. She needs to develop a power offense it seems (4) because Yamada tries to carry her in this baby, but Kyoko isn't up to her usual form (5). Kyoko goes over after a listless outing at the biggest Joshi show in five years (6) and wins with a lariat that has more meaning now than when she would use it earlier in her career.(7) Kyoko is quite the poorman's Eagle Sawai. She can't sell, her offense sucks eggs, and she is immobile. Hey! THIS SUCKED! Yamada deserved better than this. A broom? A pulse? Crusher Maedori?

Sugar Sato/ Chikayo Nagashima vs. The Bloody/ Toshie Uematsu:

Hey! The Bloody makes it to the big leagues! WOO-HOO! now if Sakie and Yabushita can get all cross promotional, the rest of the world will see ALL the best kept secrets in Joshi Puroresu. I always liked the Bloody more than the soon-to-be-retired-a-minute-before-tagging-with-Achiki -and-Nakano-in-IWA-RESTART Kosugi. Kosugi is a fine worker, but the Bloody is all about the spunk and seems more adapted to a run in GAEA, so I'm glad she is doing a tour with them. Kosugi would come off as lesser version of Nagashima- and God knows Kosugi isn't as good as Nagashima.(8) I await the Bloody vs everybody. Now if Aja would bring the ARSION army over and we have a full-blown undercard wrestlefest, I would be in total heaven. Toshie Uematsu starts off by beating the hell out of Nagashima so Chikayo starts suplexing the hell out of her. Toshie and Chikayo then go counter out of counter out of counter until sweet SUGAR starts kicking Toshie in the face. The Bloody comes in makes the save and Sugar makes her Locomotion German suplex look downright in the Hasegawa Realm before Sugar retaliates with

her jumpy, hurty Lyger Bomb. Bloody hits the cool as fuck Straightjacket Camel Clutch/Romero Special variation. Sugar and Toshie are all bitchy to each as the Bloody counters out of the third Lyger Bomb with a cool as fuck counter into a roll-up. Nagashima came up with the ending because it is cool as fuck and elaborate as all fuck: The Bloody tries to counter out of the fourth LygerBomb attempt by turning it into a hurricanrana but Nagashima drop kicks the Bloody right in the face as she hits the lowest point before she can turn Sugar over. Sugar then just powers her back up for the final Lybgr Bomb for the win. they GOTTA keep the Bloody around and they GOTTA give the Bloody and Uematsu a run with the AAW tag belts. This was great. I want more.

MISS HARDCORE KAORU vs. Mayumi Ozaki: (9):

ECW- batch of pussies. WCW- pathetic nothings. WWF- Pat Boone blathersgate of sheer garbage. When YOU- the wrestling- want ANGLES that deliver the motherfucking GOODS, you go see Ms. Nagayo and see what she has revving under the hood. This is something that just pulls the motherfucking trigger- from an angle standpoint. This is MATCH of the YEAR! IN MY PANTS!(10) I watched this and said what you will say- WHAT THE FUCK IS GOING ON HERE?!?! And why didn't shit like this happen when I was single in college? The subtext is REALLY great if you don't speak Japanese like I don't. The story I'll came up with is that Ozaki and her police clad LESBIAN LOVAH are out to either recruit or destroy the symbol of Joshi heterosexuality- the astoundingly hot as all fuck KAORU. They have this weird-ass thing where they are getting in this pull-apart in the studio where it looks like Mayumi is trying get her tongue in KAORU's mouth. KAORU fights her off and they switch to the entrances where both are regaled with sexually questionable valets/seconds. To further the Apartment Wrestling Fantasy Gone Horribly Right (11) aspect of this match, KAORU tortures all who enjoy the pleasure of laaadies by sporting the tight as all hell bell bottoms and the halter top that says I'll kick your skank redneck ass all the back to the Macon County line (12), bitch. Ozaki is clad in the equally lust-welling S and M Domination Cocktail Dress that makes the number one match on the joshi bed-wetter Super Choker 2000 Hit List. The match itself starts off really slow- as it goes 28 minutes and they kinda fiddle around until KAORU proves her Miss Hardcore moniker is honest by hitting the totally gnarly senton through the table- which looked really great and fracture-inducing. KAORU continues her streak of fifty consecutive TV wrestling matches with a full body coverage bladejob. the blood starts starts in the ring corner and the outfits and the circumstances and the estrogen-soaked sexuality races past your ability to comprehend the compelling sexual imagery bombarding your senses and it overtakes your ability to distinguish right from wrong, wrestling from sexual archtypography, healthy sexuality from perversion. (13) This match is fun! Add to the fucked-up sexual overtones- lesbians dressed as prison guards selling lowblows, Ozaki assuming the role of World's Most BadAss Lipstick Lesbian and KAORU mixing her totally open womanly sexuality with fucking BUCKETS of blood- add the fact that this has some of the most bone-crushing bumps and most neck-crimping power moves of any match this year- as Ozaki hits a Tequila Sunrise Suplex on the ramp, KAORU fricking DESTROYS her Lesbianic oppressor with a cool as all get out Northern Lights Bomb/Death Valley Driver combo on the same ramp, Ozaki powerbombs the heterosexuality out of KAORU onto a trashcan- snapping KAORU's divine neck into an impossible direction, KAORU hits a Moonsault off a Ladder through a table and Superplexes Ozaki off the top of the ladder. The

problem with this match is that it wasn't actually a very good wrestling match. It had really great spots and the angle was fucking as balls out as anything ever, but nothing was really logical or sold overly well or built up to anything. Plus the valets were annoying after the ninth save. I dunno. This might be the best match ever that wasn't ACTUALLY good- just because the parts of the match didn't add up to a good match, but the parts of the match are so freaking cool in and of themselves that it made it highly watchable, if not satisfying in a conventional puroresu psychological sense. At the end, Ozaki and her valet kiss for a long time and teenage boys all over Japan are suddenly spent and their acne is a little more under control. I thank you, Oz and KAORU, and teenage boys everywhere thank you. Thank you.

Aja Kong vs Meiko Satomura:

Aja Kong is the best wrestler on the face of the earth and this is the best match-up currently on the face of the earth- and this is their best match yet. This match is motherfucking awesome. It's pretty well documented my affection for the dynamic of this match-up- as it combines the wrestling positioning of Misawa trying to knock off Tsuruta but also adds in dump vs Chigusa as distilled through sheer wrestling prowess as opposed to hair vs hair angles and big angle set-ups during the Crush Gals singing a number. Aja plays her role to the hilt in this match as she shows the total range of emotion as the MAN TO BEAT: showing triumph as she thinks she's finally got her young punk nemesis beat, showing terror and desperation as she sees her title and position possibly slipping away as Meiko refuses to go away while flying into submissions mid-match to build to the FUCKING GREAT finish. After beating the living hell out of each other for the first three-fourths of the match with the pattern of Aja being on offense, wearing down Satomura until Satomura can get in a spin kick or an elbow smash to get on offense- a pattern making it similar to the psychology of the Aja-Kansai series of 1993 and 94- but with Meiko Satomura being a far more versatile and polished Kansai, thus allowing for a wider range of options for Aja to build an even more compelling series of matches. Here Aja is the hunted and Aja uses that to draw the viewer into the pathos of the match. Meiko is the young face with boundless fighting spirit and Aja is the wily veteran with immense pride and self-determination. The chemistry is very rare and we are all lucky that this all happened under Chigusa's charge because I think only she could get it the point that it would all happen in front of the biggest Joshi crown since 1996 with the elder protagonist as an outsider to the promotion and the younger protagonist as the groomed heir apparent in the promotion- a match-up that relieves a lot of politics in predicting a winner, the key to what makes GAEA interesting and AJW boring as 1998 Michinoku Pro. After the body of the first 3/4 of the match pretty much lays waste to both combatants, the only thing either has left is one knock out combination each: Meiko musters the energy to hit a Somersault Front Kick to set up her Death Valley driver; Aja struggles to hit brainbusters to set up her Urican and then Aja is down to mustering a lariat to set up her Urican. The finish is fucking ingenious in its psychological depth as Meiko can only muster one last desperation Death Valley Bomb that HAS to finish Aja and- with great finality for young Meiko- it doesn't. When Meiko tries for another, she is too spent to raise up Aja and Aja slugs her way out and can finally start laying in the final Uricans. Meiko's fighting spirit drags out the last two or three but the last ungloved Urican kills her dead and Aja can barely make the pin. I love this stuff. I eagerly await the re-re-rematch. This feud could be great for five more

years as the changes in dynamics of the match-up with the on-going ascension of Meiko to the top of the GAEA pecking order.

Chigusa Nagayo/ Lioness Aska vs Akira Hokuto/ Devil Masami:

Hey, here's your big money match- will it be a money match like Hokuto vs Kandori or a money match like Hogan vs Andre? this is the eternal question for all big money matches. this one isn't horrible by any stretch, but it was kinda cut and paste Joshi Puroresu. Devil continues her hot streak by looking all dangerous in this, Viagra Driving Lioness's skull through the mat, and Akira Hokuto seems to be slowly getting back to pre-maternity form and hits a nice Northern Lights Bomb. there was some neat things in this- the Akira Hokuto I've-Seen-His Mounting-Face-So-I'm -Using-His-Finisher STRANGLEHOLD GAMMA; the crowd popping for the old Crush Gal double team Kung Fu moves. There's plenty of blood and plenty of big moves and there is the pre-requisite thousand near finishes. It's quite a fine batch of wrestling. You'll never guess who wins. You'll remember nothing about this unless you watch it five times like I had to.

Overall: Oh yeah, get this right fucking now.

~!~

^!^!^!^!OSAKA PRO WRESTLING 1/4/00 (Osaka Namihaya Dome, Samurai!) (POGO PETE)
It's the wackiest lucharesu group in Osaka!

EBESSAN(1) vs. KUSHINBO KAMEN:

It's a battle to see who has the goofiest gimmick in OPW, which is quite a feat even by their standards.(2) Match proper doesn't really start until about 10 minutes in after they've finally exhausted their supply of comedic material(3). Ebessan pulls off some cool stuff at the end including a running Liger bomb, a frog splash, a moonsault and the Whiplash before Kushinbo catches him with a dropkick as he goes for a plancha, hits a Frankenstein off the top and finishes him off with whatever he calls the Cancun Tornado at 13+ minutes. Postmatch everyone's palsy-walsy and I take Emi for a walk to clear my head lest I OD on whimsy.

DYNAMITE KANSAI vs. CHIKAKO SHIRATORI:

This match has been rated "GM-GA."(4) Shiratori actually controls the balance of the clips using some urakens on Dynamite, but the outcome is never in doubt here. Dynamite catches Shiratori coming off the top with a kick and goes for Splash Mountain but Shiratori hits a Toyota Roll for 2. Dynamite responds by NUKING Shiratori with a punt to the face and hitting SM for the win at 8:10. OK Scott, you can look up now...

ULTRA ACE/ULTRA MONKEY vs. KAIJU Z MANDORA/KAIJU KING MANDORA:

It's Ultraman's sickly nephew TIMMAH~! and Monkey Magic (wearing the Ultra gimmick- CONTINUITY!) against the guys with the greatest monster masks ever.(5) I'm guessing they had a match too.

TSUBASA/YOSHIHITO SUGAMOTO/SUPER DEMEKIN vs. BLACK BUFFALO/DAIO
QUALLT/POLICEMAN:

JIP at about the 15-minute mark with Sugamoto getting his keister handed to him by Policeman and the improving Buffalo. Policeman tries to German Sugamoto, who breaks away, hits a dropkick and tags Tsubasa in. Tsubasa hits sort of an inverted Valkyrie Splash (splash-to-moonsault instead of the other way around) and they work a cool triple-team sequence on Buffalo: Tsubasa Frankenstein, Sugamoto dropkick and a Demekin German for 2.5 after Buffalo gets to his feet. Pier Six follows as Qualtt singles out Demekin, hits a powerbomb and follows with ahhhhhhhhhhTHECHOKESLAM. Mini Kane tries to hit it a second time but Tsubasa sends him to the floor with a missile dropkick and then hits a Frankenstein on Policeman for 2. Tsubasa hits the ropes only for Buffalo to tie him up and drag him into the corner. Policeman charges, but Tsubasa gets his feet up and Policeman gets knocked back into Demekin who schoolboys him for the upset pin at 20:10. Good action from what they showed, but you gotta wonder WTF was in those first 15 minutes that they had to totally delete it.

TAKEHIRO MURAHAMA vs. NAOHIRO HOSHIKAWA:

Murahama is a former K-1 fighter making his puroresu debut... in a lucha group? Duh, OK... Hoshikawa actually controls the first half of the match before Murahama starts to land his strikes in the second round. Hoshikawa gets wasted in the third round, finally getting TKO'd at 3R 1:38 after getting knocked down 3 times. It goes without saying that Murahama's good at striking, but how much good this will do him in a frigging lucha-style promotion remains to be seen.

OSAKA PRO WRESTLING TITLE DECISION MATCH: DICK TOGO vs. SUPER DELFIN:

Match is slow to start as Delfin works over Togo's leg and hamstring, then sends him outside with the corbata and gives him a second one on the floor. Togo's LOV(6) buddies pick up the slack for him as Policeman pulls him to the floor so Togo can place a chair on his leg and Pillmanize it with a footstomp off the apron. Togo controls the next several minutes by working over Delfin's bad wheel; Delfin gets a brief spurt in and hits a Frankenstein, but Togo stops him on the way down, turning the move into a Boston crab and then an STF. Togo picks Delfin up by the leg, but Delfin hits a desperation enzuigiri. He tries to go for the Delfin Special, but Togo back kicks Delfin's bad leg, reaches through his legs and sweeps the leg(7) then puts on a leglock. Cool sequence, especially when you would expect him to just nut Delfin and take over that way. Togo sets up Delfin in the corner ala the Goldust Punt; Delfin recovers and sends Togo to the floor without bothering the leg, which Qualtt puts an end to by running in and tossing a chair at the bad leg while Delfin goes for a plancha. Nice touch. Togo posts Delfin and helps Policeman setup a table to try and suplex Delfin through from in-ring, but Delfin shotays him into the table then hits a plancha to the floor. Delfin then posts Togo who sells it for a long time before Delfin throws him back into the ring. Delfin is in control and soon goes for the Tornado DDT, but Togo flips out of it at the last nanosecond and hits a Liger bomb on Delfin for 2. He heads up top for the senton; Delfin meets him there, gets knocked down and Togo goes for a plancha, but Delfin spikes him with a dropkick. He airballs a shotay on Togo and signals for the Osaka Stunner but Togo nuts him and hits a lariat for 2. Togo heads up top and *splatters* Delfin with the senton but Delfin kicks out at 2.999. He goes up for it again, but Delfin rolls out of the way, crushes him with an Implant DDT, hits the Tornado DDT successfully and slaps on

the Delfin Clutch for 2. Delfin hits a pair of shotays for near-falls; Togo ducks a third attempt, only for Delfin to Stunner him and hit one more shotay for the pin at 21:04 to become the first OPW champion. Excellent match... Delfin could've sold the leg better on offense but that's a minor quibble considering how smartly the whole match was laid out.

Overall a fun little show. Would've liked to see the whole six-man especially considering how trios matches were the best thing about Delfin's old group, but for the most part they have some solid guys and lots of goofiness. Can't go wrong with that.

SINGLES GOING STEADY

Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Eddie Guerrero - Mask v. Title- 10/26/97: (SCHNEIDER)

This match was probably the apex of the WCW junior heavyweight style of wrestling(1), and may be the best WCW match of the 1990's(2). This match placed Eddie's cruiserweight title up against Rey's mask (3). This match was worked at such a fast pace and the moves executed were of a tremendous difficulty level, this also had great commentary as Tony was sufficiently awed, Heenan kept his mouth shut and Tenay was actually useful (4). Highlights included Eddie (5) turning a Rey Jr.(6) springboard into a quebradora, Rey turning a Tiger Fake into a headscissors to the floor and then hitting a springboard rana onto Eddie on the floor, one of the best powerbombs I have ever seen by Eddie and most amazingly a springboard somersault DDT by Rey Jr. which is still one of the cooler spots ever. The end was the overused Splash Mountain into a rana finisher which was quite the finish de jour from 1995-97 (7). This match was truly revolutionary in its speed, intricately and force, and was a height that because of injuries it is unlikely either man will reach again. (8)

INOKI FINAL COUNTDOWN 5TH: ANTONIO INOKI vs. BIG VAN VADER (NJ 1/4/96, Tokyo Dome): (PETE STEIN)

I know, I know... it's Inoki the fifty-something bastard selfishly putting himself over a vastly superior opponent. That was what I thought at the time I read the result, but it's one thing to read "Antonio Inoki b Big Van Vader" in the WON... it's another matter ENTIRELY when you see the match and get a load of the ungodly beating Vader inflicts upon Inoki's person in exchange for doing the J-O-B at the end. Prematch intro for Inoki may be the most dramatic one I've ever seen as a harpist suspended in mid-air plays his theme, which sounds like the music they would play at ones funeral. (1) Vader gives Inoki a massive pimp-slap before the bell and proceeds to spend the next several minutes just annihilating the old man inside the ring and out, no-selling what little offense Inoki can muster. The pinnacle of this is The Spot. Inoki finally struggles back into the ring, where Vader hits an uraken, teases a powerbomb only to get behind Inoki... AND KILLS ANTONIO INOKI DEAD WITH THE NASTIEST GERMAN SUPLEX IN THE HISTORY OF OUR GREAT SPORT. A blind man could pop for The Spot based on sound alone. (2) Vader continues to brutalize Inoki on the floor before Inoki backdrops him into the ring and gets in some offense with a Bombs Away, some strikes and the enzuigiri. Inoki sends Vader to the floor and juices him with a chairshot, which serves only to piss Vader off even more. (3) Inoki punches away and goes for the armbreaker but Vader gets a ropebreak, then

slips behind and puts on a choke sleeper. Vader releases the hold and fucking MURDERS Inoki with a chokeslam, then goes for the powerbomb; a bloodied (huh?) Inoki slips behind and goes for the enzuigiri again, but Vader ducks it and slaps on a Dragon Sleeper. He hits the Vader Bomb off the middle ropes, but Inoki kicks out. Vader then hits the MOONSAULT- ditto. Finally Vader hits Inoki with the Big Van Crush, but Inoki slams him as he goes for a second and slaps on the armbreaker for the expected tap-out. The result was annoying, but not nearly as much as you'd expect since Inoki got his assed destroyed throughout, sold it about as well as you could hope for from him, made Leon look like the big, scary monster he was and "got lucky" at the end. I'm down with that. (4)

Shinobu Kandori vs. Akira Hokuto: (SCHNEIDER)

This match was a retirement match and was the rematch of their Dreamslam 1 match(1). The Dreamslam match was so great because they built nearly 40 minutes of great wrestling and after wrestling couldn't finish the match, they resorted to shoot punching each other in the face. They dispensed with the wrestling in this one, and got right to the ass-stomping. They open with a staredown, and an exchange of super nasty straight rights. Hokuto comes up with a mouth full of blood. The rest of the match is in that vein. Hokuto did hit some suplexes (which dropped Kandori right on her neck) and her tope-con-hilo, but most of the match consisted of the ladies punching each other in the face, with the bigger and stronger Kandori just brutalizing Hokuto. The ending was all brutal and dramatic with Kandori hitting some viscous uppercuts and the AJW girls at ringside screaming and crying and trying to run in the ring, Kandori wins the match with a KO punch, and Hokuto is helped back by her despondent promotional mates. The match was only about ten minutes but it told a layered story and both wrestlers delivered great athletic and acting performances. One of my favorite matches for pure drama.

Jumbo Tsuruta/Akira Taue/Masa Fuchi vs. Kenta Kobashi/Toshiaki Kawada/Mitsaharu Misawa (4/20/91)

(SCHNEIDER):

It is kind of bizarre to see Kobashi, Kawada and Misawa all on the same team, with the years of opposition after this. The opening moments of this match are all about hate as, Taue(1) slaps Kawada and these two tear at each other in the beginning, with Kawada being all pissed off and fired up, at one point even flipping off Fuchi(2) when he tries to pull him off Taue. Misawa and Kobashi do a bunch of Fantastical double teaming, including a Misawa rocket launching a slim and handsome Kobashi to the floor. The big middle section of the match has the Jumbo team just wasting Kobashi's knee with Jumbo being a super prick, including knee-busting Kobashi on the guadrail and on a chair. Fuchi is really boss in this part too, as he gets all stretchy and carny on the mat. They demolish Kobashi's knee for almost 15 minutes and it tends to drag the match a bit, although when Kawada does the superface hot tag, the crowd loses their collective shit. They then move into the super hot ending, with Misawa and Jumbo working together a bit (including Jumbo hitting some really nasty knee strikes to Misawa's head.) The match ends up with Misawa and Taue squaring off, and Misawa hitting a Tiger Suplex for the win. Damn good old style All Japan match, wasn't a single neck bump, but the match still rocked ass(3). The Kobashi knee section was really long, and I would have liked to see the Kawada v. Taue heat

continue as it was the best part of the match, and was kind of dropped in the finish. I wouldn't have minded more Misawa v. Jumbo too, but that is a given.

[illegible]

NEXT WEEK: Rippa screeches like a little girl at the mention of the word "footnotes", Schneider tries to get a real job, Dean embarrasses the Rasmussen name North of the Border, plus a whole bunch of wrestling reviews.

THE DEATH VALLEY PLAYBOYS.

seven fists in the face of wrestling

^^*^*^*^*^

Come down to the willow garden with me

come go with me

come go and see

Although I've howled across fields and my eyes-turned grey

are yours still the same?

are you still the same?

Carry Home

I have returned

through so many highways

and so many tears

Your letter never survived the heat of

my hand

my burning hand

my sweating hand

Your love never survived the heat of

my heart

my violent heart

in the dark

-Jeffrey Lee Pierce (1958-1996) of the Gun Club